United Nations S/PV.8267

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8267th meeting
Thursday, 24 May 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Wronecka	(Poland)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Djédjé
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pronin
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Ms. French

Agenda

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

18-15893 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2018/492, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Côte d'Ivoire, France, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2417 (2018).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren (Netherlands): I deliver this statement on behalf of the co-penholders that put forward resolution 2417 (2018), on conflict and hunger, that is, Côte d'Ivoire, Kuwait, Sweden and the Netherlands.

Tuesday's open debate (see S/PV.8264) on the protection of civilians, which you organized, Madam President, provided ample evidence of the timely nature of our resolution, and of its necessity. As stated in the report (S/2018/462) of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians, the number of food insecure people is increasing, mainly due to armed conflict. Recent reports from the World Food Programme and the United Natiions Food and Agriculture Organization confirm that deeply concerning trend.

Today's resolution is a landmark text, wherein the Security Council for the first time unequivocally condemns the use of starvation as a method of warfare. It also clearly acknowledges the fact that conflict can lead to increased food insecurity, and recognizes the need to break the vicious cycle between armed conflict and food insecurity. Most important, the text places the most vulnerable people in conflict situations firmly on the agenda of the Council. Innocent civilians suffering from hunger due to the consequences of war are at the heart of the text, as is respect for international humanitarian law and accountability.

I would like to highlight three important aspects of the resolution. First, with regard to early warning, the Secretary-General will brief the Council whenever situations occur where people are severely food insecure as a consequence of war. Secondly, on humanitarian assistance, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access must be granted, in line with international humanitarian law. Thirdly, with regard to utilizing its toolkit, the Council can consider sanctioning, as appropriate, those who unlawfully deny humanitarian access or starve civilians. It can also task peacekeeping operations with facilitating humanitarian access.

It is truly an encouraging sign that the Council has managed to agree unanimously on some of the basic norms of humanity. We would like to thank all Council members for their genuinely constructive engagement throughout the negotiation process. Today we managed to take another significant step towards making the use of starvation as a method of warfare a crime of the past.

Mr. Hickey (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the adoption of resolution 2417 (2018), the first to recognize the clear link between armed conflict and hunger. We thank the Netherlands, Kuwait, Sweden and Côte d'Ivoire for their work.

Millions of civilians in situations of armed conflict continue to suffer alarming levels of hunger caused overwhelmingly by political and military action. The Council's unanimous adoption of this text today underlines its belief that starvation is not something that parties to conflict are powerless to prevent, and signals our shared determination to take action. Today's resolution calls on parties to armed conflict to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and to refrain from using starvation as a method of

warfare. Its relevant obligations relate to humanitarian access, the protection of infrastructure critical to providing food to civilians, and the importance of refraining from attacking, destroying, removing or rendering useless objects that are essential to the survival of civilian populations.

We know that conflict is the main contributor to hunger in South Sudan, for instance. In February 2017, famine was declared in Unity state, where some 100,000 people faced starvation. The declaration led to an escalated humanitarian response in the affected areas, and the famine status was lifted in June 2017. Sadly, that situation has since deteriorated. In January 1 million people were already severely food insecure, a 40 per cent increase compared with the same time last year. United Nations agencies say that the food-security outlook in South Sudan has never been as dire as it is now. Nearly two thirds of the population — more than 7 million people — will need food aid to stave off starvation in the May-to-July lean season, which corresponds to the hiatus between the depletion of food stocks and the next harvest. The lesson is clear: humanitarian aid can only ever be a sticking plaster. The solutions are political. In today's resolution, the Security Council calls on the Secretary-General to provide it with early warning about conflict-related famine and food-insecurity conditions. In that regard, we look forward to more regular reporting on conditions within the context of country-specific situations.

Today the Security Council has been clear in denouncing the use of hunger as a tool of war and in calling on all parties to conflicts to recall their obligations to the most vulnerable. We look forward to working with the other members of the Council on this vital issue.

Ms. French (United States of America): We are pleased to join you, Madam President, in welcoming the adoption of resolution 2417 (2018), the first to recognize the clear links between armed conflict and famine and the important role that the Council can play in addressing this challenge. The text of the resolution is one that we have been glad to sponsor. We would like to thank the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Kuwait, Sweden and Côte d'Ivoire, the members of the core group, for their work in bringing it to fruition.

As we have said before, the connection between conflict and hunger is undeniable. We are pleased that today's resolution definitively resolves any remaining doubt about that link. Today the Security Council has unanimously demanded that parties to armed conflict comply with their obligations under international law and has called on all parties to protect infrastructure critical to providing food to civilians. Today we set forth a clear expectation that parties to conflict should not take steps to perpetuate hunger and the suffering of people.

Perhaps most importantly, the text makes it clear that the Council must be prepared to respond in order to prevent famine caused by conflict. In line with the resolution, we encourage the Secretary-General to be proactive in warning the Council about such conditions so that it can respond. In that regard, we look forward to more regular and continuous reporting on famine conditions within the context of country-specific situations. We have demonstrated here today that we have the will to address conflict-related hunger, and we look forward to working with members of the Council to sustain our focus and attention to this important issue.

Mr. Pronin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank the delegations of the Netherlands, Sweden, Kuwait and Côte d'Ivoire for preparing the text of resolution 2417 (2018). We are particularly grateful to our Dutch colleagues for coordinating it and for facilitating its agreement. We have noted our partners' professionalism and constructive approach to problem-solving and finding consensus-based language for a number of delegations' most sensitive issues. We are grateful for their willingness to consider the priorities and concerns of all delegations during the course of a quite complex negotiation process, which has ultimately enabled us to achieve a balanced document supported by all Council members.

We continue to believe that the problem of food security is complex and involves many factors. Armed conflicts are only one of the issues that can have a negative effect on supplying a population with food. We also have to take into account important factors such as fluctuations in the global price of raw materials and manufactured goods, imbalances in global food distribution, the consequences of natural disasters, and climate change. Another important item on that list are unilateral economic restrictions and sanctions. All of those factors, to a lesser or greater extent, make it difficult to ensure food security around the world, something that research by the United Nations specialized humanitarian agencies clearly confirms.

This problem cannot be solved on the political front alone. It extends far beyond the scope of the Security Council. Ensuring that all parties comply with international humanitarian law, which is the point of this resolution, is certainly an important criterion for success, but it is no less important to combine efforts on every front to create opportunities and capacities for local food production, stabilize global commodity markets, liberalize trade, mitigate the effects of natural disasters and refrain from unilateral restrictive measures. It goes without saying that this is a labour-intensive process, but until we take that path, humanitarian needs will only increase. Humanitarian assistance can treat the symptoms, but it cannot cure the disease itself. The continued worrying situation in four countries where the threat of starvation was announced last year only confirms that fact.

Without comprehensive efforts by the international community to create a more just socioeconomic system, the burden on humanitarian agencies, in real terms, is only going to increase. For our part we will continue to provide them with support, and we encourage them in turn to work with full commitment and respect for the guiding principles of humanitarian assistance, as the resolution that we have adopted today stipulates.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.